

TRANSVERSE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IN SERBIA

Las acciones transversales para mejora de gestión del patrimonio en Serbia

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ABSTRACT

Better ties with the international community and recent social and economic growth in Serbia created conditions for facing many long term neglected issues of the heritage preservation. The successful management consists of many elements which, at the end, create mosaic that truthfully reflects every step of the way. In case of Serbia, transversal actions came into focus, as key advantages of the world heritage management for the Serbian community.

While the country suffered from the political turmoil and the isolation, the international management policy has evidently advanced. Many societies have tendency to stay always in a deficit that may take many different forms. However, in Serbia, there is effort to overcome the deficit in the heritage management that emerged in the last two decades. Also, there is a will to take the approach that anticipates future trends at international level.

The topic has been briefly considered in the light of priorities of the community and its ability to accept the heritage-based development.

Key words: heritage, management, transversal action, Serbia

RESUMEN

Las mejores relaciones con la comunidad internacional y un reciente crecimiento económico y social en Serbia han creado las condiciones necesarias para acometer temas referentes al mantenimiento del Patrimonio Cultural abandonados durante mucho tiempo. La gestión, realizada con éxito, consta de diversos elementos que, finalmente, crean un mosaico que refleja cada paso del camino realizado. Las acciones transversales se convierten en claves de la gestión del Patrimonio Mundial en el propio territorio.

Mientras el país ha sufrido los desórdenes políticos y el aislamiento, la política de

gestión internacional ha avanzado significativamente. Muchas sociedades tienden a mantenerse en una situación de déficit que puede adquirir formas diferentes. No obstante, en Serbia se está realizando un gran esfuerzo para superar el déficit en la gestión del Patrimonio Cultural surgido en las dos últimas décadas. Así mismo, hay voluntad para una aproximación que anticipe futuras tendencias a nivel internacional.

Este tema se ha considerado brevemente a la luz de las prioridades de la comunidad y su capacidad para aceptar el desarrollo basado en el Patrimonio Cultural.

Palabras clave: patrimonio, gestión, acción transversal, Serbia

1 INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Serbia faced the political turmoil in early 1990s, which included several armed conflicts, leaving the country in the isolation and almost without allies. Also, the cooperation in science and cultural development was substantially reduced. Better ties with international community since the beginning of 21st century and recent social and economic growth in Serbia created conditions for facing many issues of heritage preservation, which were neglected for long time. In meantime, the management of cultural heritage significantly advanced at the global level.

The interest in heritage management policies and strategies increased in the 1990s. The heritage management has been recognized as increasing challenge of heritage preservation in the last 2-3 decades. Eventually, Serbia “skipped” this period of evolution of heritage preservation, and nowadays, it is in a huge deficit. Heritage preservation in Serbia emerged in 19th century and it became well organized in the period between the two World Wars. After the Second World War, legislative and institutional framework improved further and put preservation on remarkable level concerning building conservation, restoration methods and integration with urban planning. The economical crises which started in 1980s destabilized the country and led to several wars in the region, further political turmoil, deterioration of institutions and the deficit in many fields. The legislation, which was considered one of the most advanced in Europe in the early 1990s, did not advance since that time. However, Serbia has become politically more stable since the beginning of the 21st century. Many initiatives followed, both external and internal, aiming to improve heritage preservation and, particularly, heritage management. If change must come from inside, in a sense that Serbian heritage institutions must reform and Parliament must adopt new laws, than all other actions in wider sense could be consider as transversal. On the other hand, it happens that heritage is not the main target, but a tool for achieving other vital goals for the society, which gives “transversal actions” more specific meaning.

Some societies have tendency to stay permanently in deficit, but in Serbia, there is strong effort to overcome the deficit in cultural heritage management that emerged in the previous two decades. In order to overcome it, it is also required to anticipate future trends and to implement them locally, in timely manner.

2 EXTERNAL INITIATIVES

The foundation of external assistance and support regarding heritage management lies in the membership of Serbia in the Council of Europe, the UN and in the status of EU candidate since 2012. In the following chapter, we will provide a brief overview of the main instruments of that support. Most significant actions come from the Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South East Europe (RPSEE), and its core is “Ljubljana Process” which Serbia joined in 2003. Based on decision by Council of Ministers, this program continued in 2011, under the name „Ljubljana process II – Rehabilitation of common heritage“(Ljubljana Proces II 2013). Ljubljana Process II is part of externally initiated contribution with political connotation “towards the stability and development of democratic, peaceful and free civil societies in South East Europe through rehabilitation and preservation of the built heritage in the region” (Ljubljana Proces II 2013). As the most important and comprehensive initiative in the region, it will be explained with more details.

The aim of Ljubljana Proces II has been implementation of high standards and new methodology, integrative multi-sector practice, regional cooperation and provision of economic sustainability. The program was applied simultaneously in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYROM, Romania, Montenegro and Serbia including Kosovo (see Figure 1, on the left).).



Figure 1: Ljubljana Process II (Ljubljana Proces II 2013)

The program included implementation of Integrated Rehabilitation Projects Plan / Survey of the Architectural and Archaeological Heritage methodology - IRPP/SAAH, institutional capacity building and local development projects.

IRPP/SAAH included several steps and different phases which are designed to set new standards in the region, regarding cultural heritage protection (IRPP/SAAH 2013). Some of the methods and procedures¹ were already in use in Serbia, however this was the occasion to recheck, optimize, enforce and align with the procedures in other European countries. Secondly, the Institutional Capacity Building Plan - **ICBP** stands for “the improvement of the already existing political structures and the creation of the administrative framework that will be responsible for the everyday management of heritage” (ICBP 2013). The main body in charge of the implementation, basically dealing with laws or draft laws on protection of the architectural heritage in the sense of the Granada Convention is the Legislative Support Task Force (CAL-“Cellule d’appui législative”). CAL has contributed to ICBP activities through series of seminars² which followed legal requests by the participating countries or regions and set the needs which emerge from the implementation of the other components of the Regional Programme (ICBP 2013). Eventually, it was most direct way to influence legal and institutional framework of the participating countries from the outside. “Supported by the European Commission in several of the projects, the *Regional Programme* emphasized the notion of “local development” as a concept covering the following aspects:

- acknowledgement of the **diversity** of the territories as a source of vitality and value;
- the setting up and implementation of **sustainable development**;

¹ **Assessment and selection of priorities** included (A) Heritage Assessment Report on the current situation of the architectural and archaeological heritage in each country, prepared in collaboration with competent authorities at the national and/or regional level and (B) Prioritized Intervention List (PIL) of the buildings and sites of high significance in each of the South Eastern European countries with particular regard to important national and/or regional heritage assets considered in urgent need of conservation and/or restoration. Heritage Assessment Report briefly presents “the legal and institutional framework in relation to the protection and enhancement of heritage, the existing management mechanisms and tools, the resources available (professional, documentary and budgetary)” (ib.). It also takes into consideration the policies and the role given to heritage in society. In drawing up the PIL, experts in each country consult with all possible stakeholders from different fields of expertise and institutions, in order to ensure a degree of national consensus on the final lists. **Elaboration of the rehabilitation projects** consists of (C) Preliminary Technical Assessment (PTA) of each building and site on the PIL is a document that describes the background of the project, its technical status and requirements for its rehabilitation, including broad cost estimates for each phase of proposed intervention, from initial conservation to full rehabilitation. The document developed during IRPP/SAAH was designed to ensure a consistent approach across countries and across project types, presenting methodological guidelines for technical activity. This analysis is a crucial operational tool in the process of attracting potential donors (IRPP/SAAH 2013).

² In Sofia, October 2004, “Legal Reform in the field of cultural heritage in South East Europe”; in Bucharest, November 2005, “Integrated Management Tools for Cultural Heritage in South East Europe” and in Belgrade, September 2006, “Enhancement of the cultural and natural heritage: a factor for sustainable development” (ib.).

- a **connection** between countries and the opening up of the region to the rest of Europe;
- An **integrated** approach to conservation, planning and development issues” (ib.).

Thirdly, the **LDPP** (Local Development Pilot Project) implements the principles of the Faro Framework Convention (on the value of cultural heritage for society) and the Florence Convention (on European landscape) through community-led and place-based pilot projects which are based on following key principles: the local population as a main player in development, heritage as an asset and synergies created for a common project.

It was revealed from the beginning of the program concerned with “peace and reconciliation in a region undergoing complex political, legal, economic and social transition”. The political process focused on heritage, as common, starting point for the redevelopment of the region. Serbia responded to this initiative and took part in it, according to its capacity and possibilities. The LDPP was so far implemented in the LDPP in Karst region in Ukraine, 1998-2002, and has been in operation in Croatia and FYROM since 2008 and in Cyprus since 2012 (LDPP 2012). Although this Programme is based on the region as whole, with overview of the overall benefit, it is implemented on local level, connecting people and communities.



Figure 2: Location of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Serbia including Kosovo (WH Serbia 2014)

Some other external initiatives are more focused on heritage itself, as ultimate goal. As active member of UN, Serbia has ratified the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 2001. There are four sites from the territory of Serbia in the World heritage list (See Fig. 2). Consequently, Serbia has been obliged to set in operation the sustainable heritage management plan for each site, starting with Studenica, the monestary complex listed as World heritage site, as well as for each of 11 nominated sites. None was completed before 2014, but the process began, implying that previously mentioned action strongly encouraged heritage management improvement.

Some European programs support only particular aspects of cultural heritage development. Serbia has recently joined Cultural Routes Programme, which was established by the Council of Europe long ago, in 1987. The Programme objective ("to demonstrate, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared cultural heritage"(Cultural Routes 2014)) has been supported by Serbia since 2012. In this case it connects people and communities which share history and similar living conditions as consequence of geographic characteristics. Each initiative has particular contribution and one of most important aspect of Cultural routes is that it connects communities which can be geographically very distant but similar in certain way.

Status of candidate for membership in EU opened possibilities for further cooperation with European countries and access to IPA (Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance) funding funds, according to Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006, for period 2007-2013, and IPA II for period 2014-2020. It leaves broad opportunities for public sector and institutions of civil society to contribute to heritage management, in particularly for local communities to take part in improving heritage on their territories in the manner that suits the best their interest.

3 DOMESTIC RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL INITIATIVES

Domestic response at great extent relay on learning capacity of emerging heritage experts and their ability to take advantage of the best practices around the world. Many publications e.g. HerO – "Heritage as Opportunity", World Bank and UNESCO publication are very helpful. They come from people who urge the state to better understand their needs and therefore needs laws, methodology, tools, institutions, funds etc to support it.

Beyond the response to requests of WHL and Ljubljana Process II, there has been initiative in Serbia for improvement of heritage management legislation according to methodology used by Anglo Saxon countries, Global Heritage Fund

or alike. Integration of heritage preservation and urban planning has been part of a discourse since the middle of 20th century, but nowadays it has new implications. Early attempts to create heritage management plan in Serbia within inadequate valid legislative framework, e.g. for Gamzigrad a WH site, were partly successful. It came in the form of *Spatial plan for the area of special use*. It is the closest to the heritage management plan, within existing legislation, but as expected, it does not include all of necessary elements (Law on planning and construction 2014). A first heritage management plan by state institutes, according to international methodology, was created for the mines of Senj in 2011. it was a pilot project and, even more importantly, designed for the cultural heritage which is not listed in WHL.

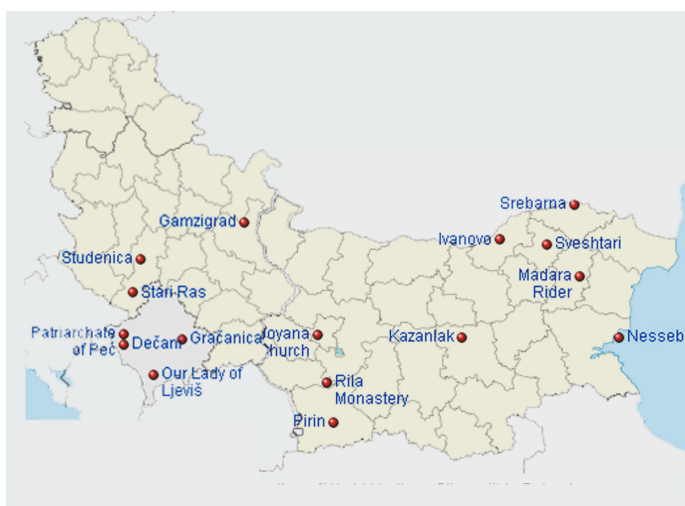


Figure 3: Vicinity of World Heritage sites in Serbia and Bulgaria (WH Serbia 2014) (WH Bulgaria 2014)(alternations by the author)

International initiatives are most welcome regarding cross-border cooperation. The borders of nowadays Serbia are not old in historical sense therefore cross-border cooperation is very significant. The following examples support this argument:

- The territory of south-east Serbia is rich in archeological heritage of great value. Majority of archaeological heritage dates from Prehistoric times or from Roman times. Territory of Serbia belonged to Moesia Superior, a Roman province which was located partly on territory of nowadays FYROM and Bulgaria. It implicates that some of archeological remains from the same period extend beyond state borders. Therefore, neighboring countries need to work actively together on developing common management strategy – including presentation and promotion of common heritage.

- Some of the World heritage sites are close to the border, located in economically not sufficiently developed areas, which may affect accessibility. Using capacities of airports in neighboring countries is useful. For instance, Gamzigrad (Fig 3.) can be easier and faster accessed from the capital of Bulgaria, than from the capital of Serbia.
- The 17th century fortress in Nish is of great local value as a symbol of the city of Nish cultural heritage site that attracts many visitors. For the better understanding of its original design as well as further preservations, cultural cooperation with Republic of Turkey (decendent of Ottoman Empire which have had the fortress built) and Switzerland (whose architect designed it) are expected to be useful.

EU grants are often conditioned by cooperation with institutions from EU. Consequently, heritage institutions from EU, Serbia and third parties cooperate on mutual projects. There are many examples of such cooperation between Serbia and Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria etc. Museums, heritage institutes and CSIs (Civil Society Institutions) are frequently included in such projects (EU Funds Balkans 2015).

However, there are domestic initiatives for heritage improvement which go beyond a response to international initiatives.

4 DOMESTIC INITIATIVES

Domestic initiatives for heritage improvement reflect necessity of resolving problems which heritage officers face on daily bases, as well local communities which are willing to preserve and develop their culture.

State of built heritage reveled that the efforts in last couple of decades were not sufficient and there are many supporting examples. One of the earliest efforts was made to improve integration of heritage preservation into spatial planning, which came as consequence of constant complains that built heritage is not well integrated in economic and social life of the society. The last generation of spatial plans which were adopted roughly between 2007 and 20012 included much better elaboration of the heritage role in the economic and social development. The improvement reflected to Spatial plan of Serbia as well as simultaneously designed spatial plans for different parts of the state (the fig. 4 shows analyses of possible connections of local cultural heritage sites with the main roads in the territory of Nish, second/third biggest city in Serbia, for the Spatial plan of administrative area of Nish). Previously, the national level spatial planning did not take in the account many aspects of heritage and, in general, Serbia did not participate in overall trend of integrating heritage into the development plans until recently. It is a common knowledge that possibilities of spatial and urban planning for heritage

management are limited; they are useful for control of land-use, but insufficient for developing of social and economic potentials of the heritage sites. Current spatial and urban planning in Serbia lacks urban-management plans designed according to project-based method for cultural heritage and in particularly heritage-led urban projects. *Inter alia*, heritage management plans include all stakeholders in the process, similar to spatial and urban plans and therefore they enable democratization of decision making process regarding heritage.

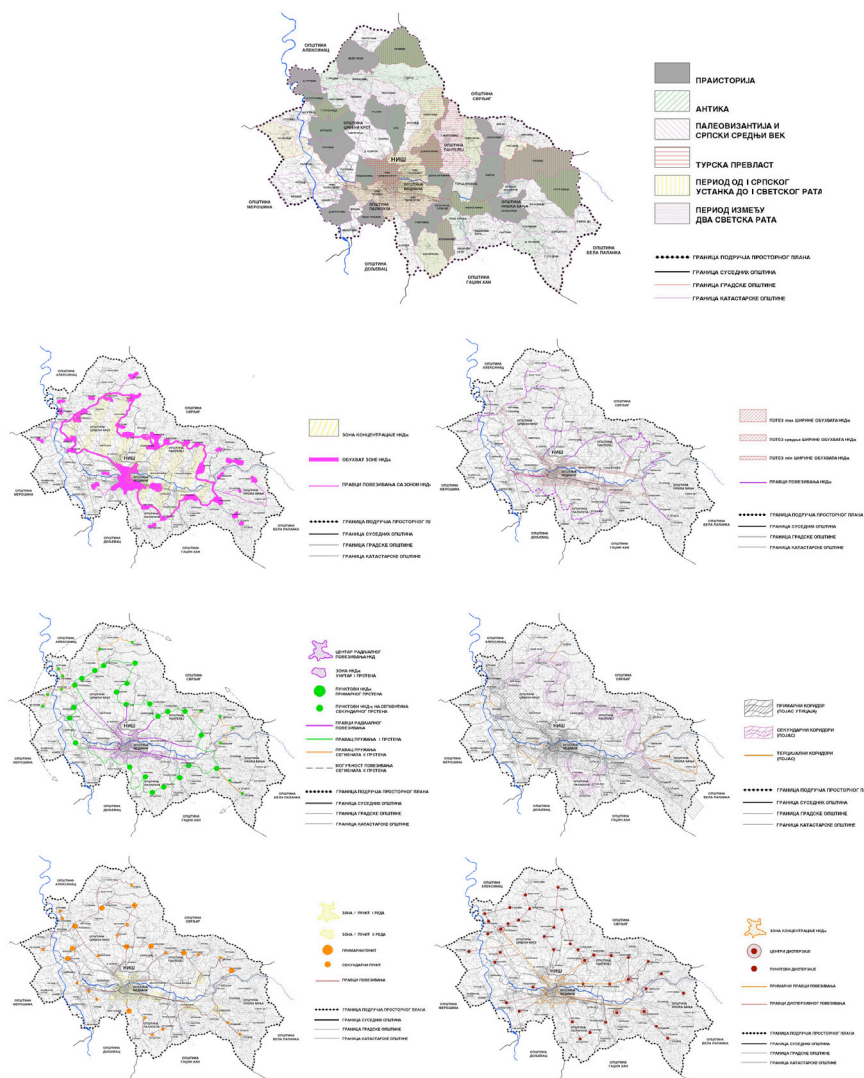


Figure 4: Integration of heritage management into spatial planning (Serbia 2015)

Some initiatives come from people who urge the state to better understand their needs and therefore they often refer to presentation of cultural heritage. “We have most valuable archeological site but is not adequately presented. It can not be shown to visitors”, complained representative of one municipality in South Serbia at the public forum about heritage management. Majority of Serbian territory was part of “Old world” and it is considered very rich in archeological heritage. Insufficient resources for archeological excavations play certain role in slow development of heritage sites. Like in other European countries, Serbia could take advantage of loosening state monopoly over archeological research and encourage privately financed archeological excavations. In recent years, CSIs have taken bigger part in improving cultural heritage, by establishing first privately owned foundation for preservation of cultural heritage in 2014. The foundation was established modeled after similar foundations in other European countries, e.g. Bryggen in Norway (which supports preservation of the WH site of the same name in Bergen). The one of the main objectives of the recently established foundation is to promote archeological and architectural heritage in historic city of Nish, which is not a WH site. This ancient town was place of birth of Constantine the Great and flourished during his reign, but it is nowadays partly lost under contemporary urban fabric. There are several layers of archeological remains of the earlier fortresses in the city center, since the third century AD under the fortress which stands today, mostly as it was originally built in 17th century. The remains of historic town (see fig. 5. up on the left) include necropolis of remarkable historical value and beauty of the artifacts. Some of them were discovered in 2011 and 2012, and it contributed to the significance of the site and to its universal value to the extent that it may be considered for listing as World heritage.

Preservation of individual buildings or group of buildings is considered a challenge in Serbia as much as in other European countries. Lately, bigger challenges lie in preservation of historic towns. Historic cities are the most comprehensive, and therefore among most difficult tasks in heritage preservation. Urban development is very complex, and therefore it is followed by many transversal actions. Facing such challenging task as urban development, numerous and diverse transversal actions are welcome, useful and beneficial. In several cities in Serbia the most valuable heritage is archeological and, therefore, situated under the contemporary urban fabric (Republic Institute for Heritage Preservation 2014). Its presentation opens many questions – possibilities for extensive excavation, expenses, organization, sustainability of the land use, presentation etc. Substantial archeological excavations in a city center may cause many problems in urban life and such projects may be easily rejected by local community. The following example refers to the ability of the local community to accept extensive heritage projects, proving that spontaneous transversal actions can be helpful, as

well. Examples from the neighboring countries and positive impacts of heritage to the socio-economic development encouraged acceptance of the project by the local community. The tombs discovered during the construction of the new Benetton factory in Nish created public discourse among stakeholders and the local community (see fig. 6, up). In general, the local community did not give advantage to the short term increase of employment provided by the factory, despite high rate of unemployment, over long term benefit based on the cultural heritage. When Roman archeological remains were discovered in the center of Sofia (see Fig. 5, down), it caused many problems regarding everyday life, upsetting stakeholders and the community, but at the end, new archeological site enriched urban landscape. The example in Sofia (120km from Nish) was familiar to the local people, and its community remained prevalently understanding and flexible despite long excavations which directly prevented completing of the factory. However, this example also reveals priorities of local community and attitude to (traditionally) industry compared to heritage based industries, and need to better correlate with its own cultural identity.



Figure 5 up on the left (up, on the right) (Archaeological site Nish 2014). Down: Excavation works on the ancient Thracian and Roman city of Serdica are taking place in the heart of modern-day Sofia (Archaeological site Sofia 2014)

5 DISCUSSION

In previous chapters it was shown that variety of initiatives come from external and internal sources, and they connect to communities and people on different level, and sometimes they are initiated or spontaneously encouraged by them. However, the research question is what the future of heritage management regarding people and communities will be like.

From the methodological point of view, one of the keys to the heritage management improvement is in understanding of cultural heritage according to Faro Convention. The scientific value of heritage management plans is based, *inter alia*, on economic analyses which reveal overall potential for development and sustainability of the area (Amirtahmasebi i Licciardi 2012). Considering that such analysis are not determined by laws or regulations, majority of practitioners in Serbia, and most probably elsewhere, are possibly not aware of the IRPP/SAAH methodology and its potential role in heritage preservation within town planning.

Furthermore, it is important to take into account what are the biggest challenges of heritage preservation in the future. Historically, we are in the middle of the process which should improve world-wide urban areas based on new socio-economic role of cultural and natural heritage. Spatial and urban planning regulations have thoroughly reconsidered issues of cultural heritage many times since the begging of the 20th century. In the same period, focus of cultural heritage management changed from antique buildings and individual objects, to ensembles including their historic context, and finally on historic spaces with their socio-historic significance (Jokilehto, 2002). Increasing importance of heritage management and urban context has already been announced in conclusions of ICOMOS meeting in Budapest (1972). One of the recent contributions was UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban landscape (2011) (UNESCO 2015), which is additionally explained in The New Life for Historic Cities regarding improvement of heritage management of urban areas (UNESCO, New Life for Historic Cities: The historic urban lanscape approach explained 2013). „As the economic and social role of the historic city changes with time, as its own uses and functions are less and less decided by its own inhabitants, but rather by global forces such as the tourism or real estate industries, the meaning of urban conservation changes and needs to be reassessed“ (Action Plan 2011) (UNESCO, UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Lanscape 2015). Population on the planet constantly increases and more than 50% live in cities. Due to demographic growth sustainable land use is an increasing challenge; concerning cultural heritage occupies prestigious locations and pressure increases. This influenced new trends in spatial and regional planning, but land use has remained central issue, although paradigm and implications has changed within the framework of sustainability. Via sustainability of land use in urban areas, as main habitat of mankind nowadays, heritage preservation more than ever interferes with daily life of people worldwide. Therefore, heritage has

to respond to community needs more than ever. In Serbia, according to presented examples it means to provide possibilities for economic development which corresponds with local identity and improves diversity and esthetic quality of urban life as alternative to development based on traditional industries. However, needs of communities in other countries may significantly differ.

If the *Regional Programme* mentioned in chapter 2 originally focused mainly on post-conflict challenges in South-East Europe, it has shifted increasingly towards development processes. Auxiliary, this case reveals role of common heritage in reconciliation process (SEE 2014.). “Based on a trans-national approach, the program attaches particular importance to issues related to the multiple cultures and religions of the Balkans. The ultimate challenge has been the long-term reconciliation between individuals and communities, a necessary pre-condition for setting up solid and sustainable regional cooperation. Apart from its general objectives, the *Regional Programme* has provided a global exchange of expertise and experience between neighboring countries facing similar situations in the fields of protection, conservation, rehabilitation and enhancement of cultural and natural heritage. Strong emphasis is placed on urban and rural management, democratic and participatory processes, and the improvement of living conditions and quality of life. The *Regional Programme* can thus help establishing a new set of regional processes to encourage the emergence of a new kind of society where long-term development projects through dialogue and the participation of all, in the collective interest, is crucial for ensuring democratic stability and social cohesion” (SEE 2014). Role of heritage in political processes is evident since long time and it should be considered as a main tool in improving current position of Serbia in the region. The examples used in this paper implicates that dealing with heterogeneous communities and several peoples, requires different approach than dealing with mostly homogeneous small local communities. In both cases, their voices must be heard as precondition of democratic management and consequently adequate heritage preservation.

6 THE CONCLUSION

Heritage preservation in Serbia needs to continue where it stopped in 1990s but much faster and taking advantage of accumulated international experience. In this paper we gave examples how different transversal actions help that process. Well balanced urban development, driven by cultural heritage, will remain a challenge for Serbia in the near future, similar to many other urban areas and the outcome will determine the social cohesion, economic success and global competitiveness of Serbian cities.

Improvement of legislative and methodological framework of heritage management is emerging. Standards set by the UNESCO and other key holders in

this field require that cultural heritage is used as catalyst of social and economic development. To achieve this, inclusion of heritage management plans into Serbian legislation is important step. Among other aspects, they assure that voice of people and local communities is heard in the process. Similar to spatial and urban plans, adoption of management plans must become obligatory and democratic, allowing broad participation.

Simultaneously, heritage takes important part in global political processes reconnecting peoples, bringing reconciliation and peace to the region, and hopefully better future to the global community as well.

Exploring recent venues in the field of heritage preservation in Serbia, correlation between heritage, urban development and communities proves that there is sincere effort to face challenging issues of heritage management and reconnect with neighboring countries and their peoples. Furthermore, it implicates that quality of understanding of communities' needs regarding heritage will define future of heritage management in Serbia and world-wide.

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